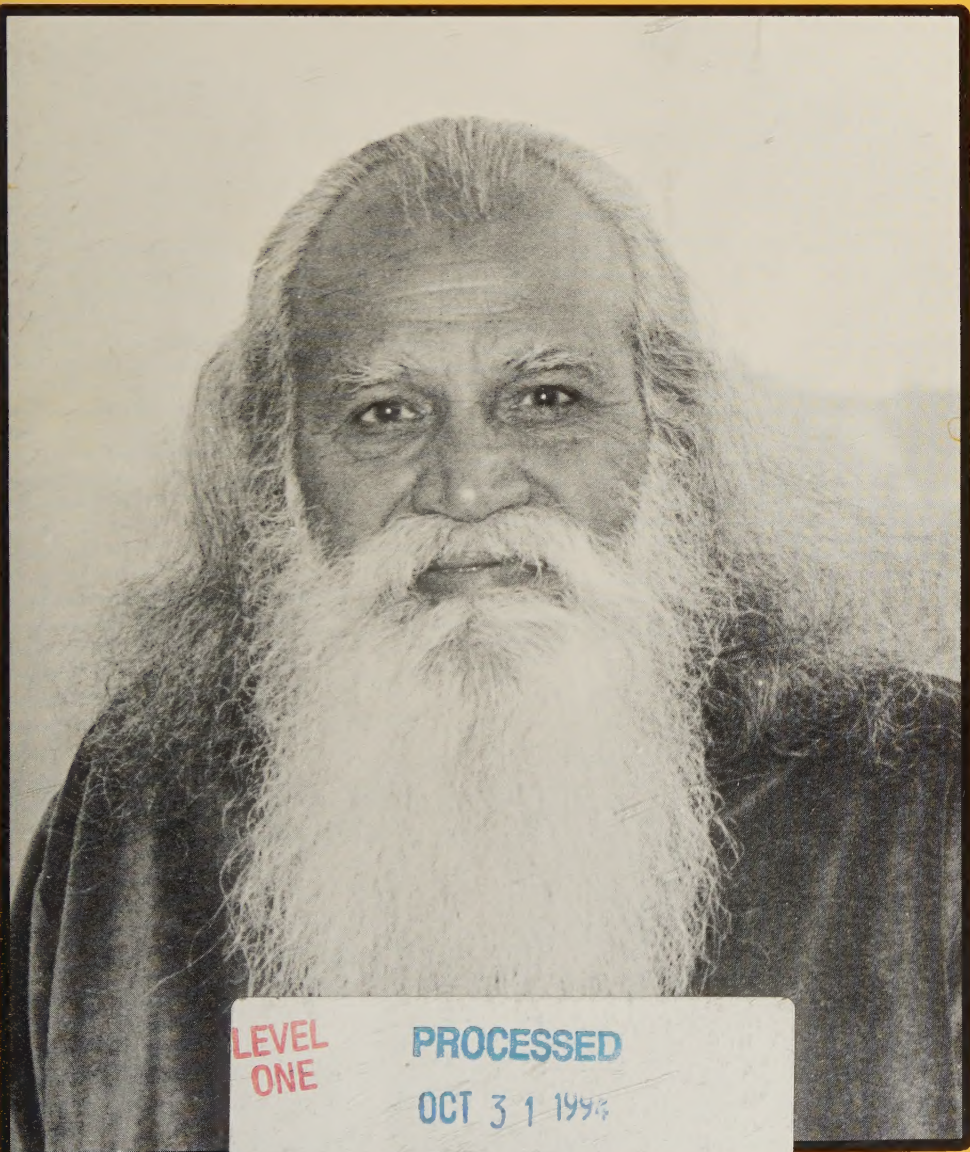


YIntegral Yoga®

THE TEACHINGS OF
SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

Autumn 1994
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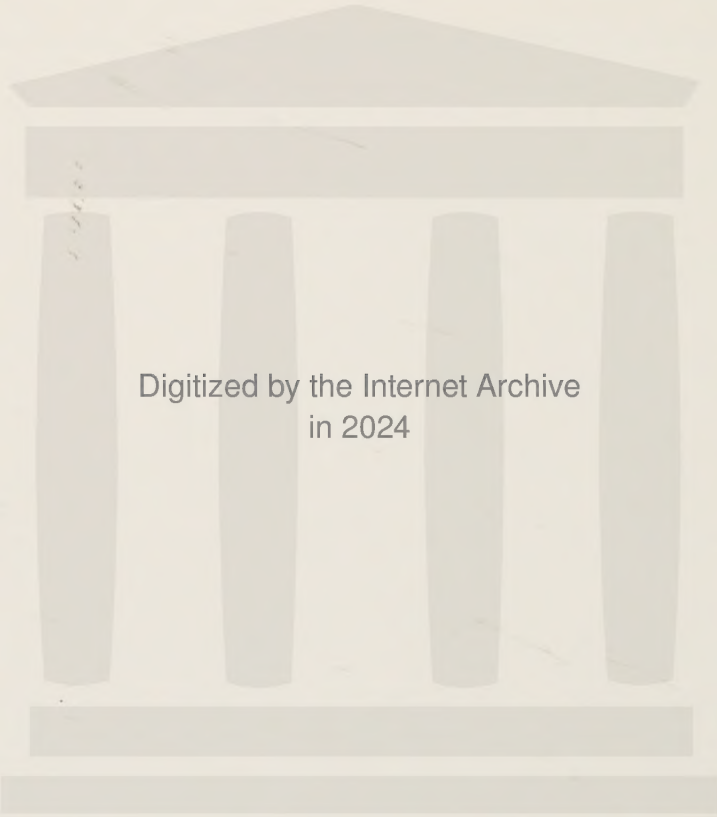


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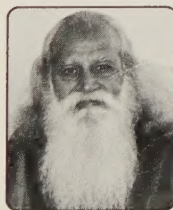
YIntegral Yoga®

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INTEGRAL YOGA® AND YOU

INTEGRAL YOGA® Magazine is the official organ of the Integral Yoga Institutes, Teaching Centers and Satchidananda Ashrams. In these centers the Integral Yoga teachings of Sri Swami Satchidananda are lived and shared. The centers offer ongoing programs in the various branches of Yoga—including Hatha, Raja, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana Yoga - as well as instruction in yogic diet and other related topics. There are open classes, courses, teacher training programs, universal worship services and retreats for both beginners and more advanced students. Resident programs, providing an opportunity to experience total yogic living, are also available.

A wide range of guest programs are offered at the Ashram in Buckingham, Virginia. Located at the Virginia Ashram are: the Audio-Video, Publishing and Distribution departments, the Fine Arts Society, the elementary school, an affiliated Credit Union, and the international coordination offices for all Integral Yoga centers.

The LOTUS (Light Of Truth Universal Shrine), a shrine dedicated to the Light of all faiths and to world peace, is open to the public and is located in Yogaville, Virginia.

For more information, to arrange an Integral Yoga program for any group, or to be put on our mailing list, please feel free to contact any of the centers listed inside the back cover of this Magazine. We are here to serve you.

LETTERS TO

I am eternally grateful for your presence in my life as teacher and light. You give me hope and inspiration to me and to the world that we may one day know ourselves and each other with love.

It is at my herbal pharmacy in Athens, Georgia that we offer Integral Yoga Hatha Levels I, II and III. I am pleased to say that the level of interest in Integral Yoga has outgrown my facility, and we are currently looking for a larger space in Athens to open a teaching center.

Your radiant light and teachings shine brightly to all corners of the world. Jai!

—M. E.

Athens, GA

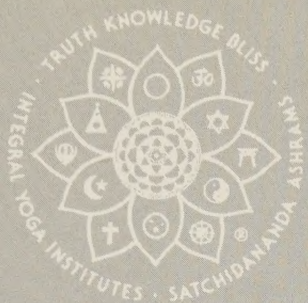
I am in the silent retreat, and I want to express my deep gratitude before I return to New York.

I have learned a lot and have found answers to my questions. How can I thank you?

—E. C.

Queens, NY

SRI GURUDEV



INTEGRAL YOGA MAGAZINE

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SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA (called "Sri Gurudev" by his students) is a master of Yoga, a world spiritual teacher, and Guru of the students of Integral Yoga. Dedicated to the ecumenical movement, his motto is: "Truth is One, Paths are Many." His main residence is in Buckingham, Virginia. In response to invitations from all around the globe, Sri Gurudev travels widely. Through every possible medium—lectures, conferences, radio, television and newspaper interviews, books and visits to centers around the world—he shares his knowledge in the fields of education, religion, health and Yoga.



SATSANG WITH SRI GURUDEV

Question: What is the activity of meditation:

Sri Gurudev: Controlling the mind, regulating the mind, forming certain impressions in the mind, a part of the mind working on the other part. That's what you call the activity of meditation. But once the meditation becomes perfect, then there is no activity.

Question: How can one keep alive the residue of meditation in one's day?

Sri Gurudev: If you don't really have the residue of your meditation in your daily activities, then there's something wrong with your meditation.

What is it that you are doing in meditation? If you are using a mantra [sound vibration], then you are repeating God's name, because the mantra, itself, is God. Therefore, you are in the presence of God, and you are feeling God's vibration by repeating the mantra; and you feel that it is the same power, God's vibration, the power of the mantra that makes you move around and do things.

Without that power, you wouldn't be doing anything; you couldn't be doing anything. When you feel that in your meditation, then you feel that even sitting and meditating is done by that power. "I am not meditating. It is God's Grace or God's power that is working through me, making me sit and rest a little. And now, when the power asks me to do something else, it will push me, and I will be going to do other things.

So it doesn't matter whether you sit or

walk or jump or sleep. You feel that every moment is happening because of this energy, God's energy, which is expressing itself in your life as the mantra. Mantra is almost like the meditation process. You can say that it's like winding a clock. You just wind the clock for half a minute, but what makes the clock tick throughout the twenty-four hours? The same winding. Any time that the clock stops ticking, it means that you haven't wound it enough. That means that it's the winding or the tension or the energy that keeps you ticking during all twenty-four hours. Whether it is 10 o'clock or 12 o'clock, it's the same tick. Are there different ticks for the different times? Irregardless of the time of day, it's the same tick.

Sitting and meditating is one form of ticking. Walking and doing things is another form of ticking. Jumping and dancing, another form of ticking. Lying down and sleeping, another form of ticking. And if you are

capable of sticking to the ticking, you can stick around a little longer. If there is any kind of movement, activity of any sort at all in this cosmos, it is because of that winding. "Without Him not even a dust or a speck moves." And that cosmic

...feel that every moment is happening because of this energy...

spring is wound. It's wound three and a half times. The three windings represent sattwa [balance], rajas [activity], and tamas [inertia] turning, and the half comes out of that.

It is that energy that unwinds every minute of your life. And there is a time when it unwinds completely and needs rewinding, and that is the time when you go into a box and get nailed down. The physical ticking is over, but, still, the mental ticking continues. Yes. What you call death is when the physi-

cal ticking is over. And that is what we should experience in our meditation, and that is the reason why after meditation you say:

*Kaayena Vaachaa Manasendriyair Vaa
Buddhyaatmanaa Vaa Prakriteh Swabhaavaat
Karomi Yad yat Sakalam Paramai
Guruvaraayeti Samarpayaaami*

What do you mean by that? "Whatever actions I may perform, impelled by the forces of Nature, by body, world, mind, senses, intellect, soul I offer to the feet of my Sat Gurudev."

With what did you do the meditation? Body, mind senses, intellect, soul, everything. So even the meditation is offered to Him. What you're saying is that "I know that even the meditation is because of your ticking. Without your energy, I couldn't even meditate. You make me jump for joy, I jump. You make sleep, I sleep. You make me eat, I eat. You make me meditate, I meditate. Without You I do nothing."

If that becomes your meditation, then it doesn't matter. The entire life becomes a meditation. It doesn't matter whether you are tightening a bolt under your car or digging a trench, or pulling a weed, or sitting in meditation. Everything becomes meditation. It is to experience that state that you do meditation.

In meditation, you take time to think of this experience, and then you carry on in your daily work. Otherwise, you are not doing the right kind of meditation; you are simply sitting and repeating the mantra, that's all. It's not enough. You have to know why you are doing it and what it is doing to you. By analogy, you may have a bundle of money in your hand, but what use is it to you if you don't know how to use it. You may not even know that you can buy things with it. You

don't know the worth of the money. So, it's not just enough to gather money. You should know the value of it, how to make use of it. And that's what should happen in meditation.

Question: How does meditation relate to a human being's place in the universe?

Sri Gurudev: That's also part of the cosmic ticking. Your ticking is also important for the cosmic purpose. That's what an individual's meditation is. The individual's act is nothing but a part of the cosmic act. It's not that you are acting. You are made to act. You are made for that purpose. Not that you made yourself. Somebody made you with a purpose. Know that somebody has made you, that somebody is making you work, and that somebody is going to make you stop. The

purpose of your free will is just to remember that; that's all. You are asked to remember that. So even if there is a prayer, a request in our prayers, this should be it: "God, You are doing everything. Occasionally, I think a bit and I know this truth, but, very often, I forget it. I know that You are also the one who makes me forget, but please don't play that trick on me. Because when you make me forget, I become miserable. I become egoistic. So please don't have fun with me like that. Please help to to remember always. I know that you are manipulating me, testing me. I don't know whether is for Your fun or whether You are testing me. I don't even know why You are doing all this. All I know is that when I forget that, I experience suffering. Enough of that suffering. Please help me not to forget."

That should be our prayer. Remember His unseen hand always. ■

The entire life becomes a meditation.

*The nature of God is a circle whose center is everywhere
and its circumference nowhere.*

—Empedocles

HOW TO MEDITATE

by Sri Swami Satchidananda

Whenever you feel in a peaceful state of mind, meditate. Just close your eyes and relax, even if it's only for a minute. If you wish to deepen your meditation, then schedule some time daily for this practice.

From the physical to the mental to the spiritual

Meditation needs the cooperation of both the body and the mind. Prepare the body with the *asanas*, or Yoga postures, and *pranayama*, breathing exercises. As for the mind, learn to keep it always fully occupied on one thing, but don't let that thing or concept bind you. Stick to one object of concentration; don't change continually. It's best to be regular in practicing meditation—try to have two daily sittings. The scriptures recommend the times when day meets night or night meets day: dawn and dusk. It's neither day nor night and thus very conducive. If this is not possible, sit as soon as you wake in the morning and at night before retiring.

If you get up after the world is already awake, it's probably best to quiet yourself by first doing the Yoga postures and some breathing practices. Then, go on to your meditation. In this way, you go from the physical to the mental and from the mental to the spiritual. It's easy to go from the gross to the subtle. If you wake very early in the morning, before dawn, it is already very *sattvic*, or peaceful. Don't disturb this with any physical practices; begin your meditation immediately.

Even in the midst of *Hatha Yoga asanas*, you may sometimes feel so very peaceful that you can simply stop doing the postures and enjoy that pleasant meditation. When you're actually trying to meditate, be very gentle. Training the mind to stay on one point is something like training a horse. If the horse doesn't want to go into a particular lane, you can't force it. It will revolt. A tricky trainer will say, "All right, where do you want to go? This way? Sure; turn." You let the horse go a few yards that way, then, slowly, you take him around. The horse is pleased: "Ah, I had my way." Very soon, the trainer will say, "I have my way now."

Your mind is something like that. Just bring it around. Otherwise, the mind will build a block of tension, and, from the moment you even think of meditating, it might create psychosomatic illnesses. You might feel a little headache or a stomachache. The mind has that power. You shouldn't

Training the mind to stay on one point is something like training a horse.

force the mind up to any level, but, at the same time, don't give it too much rope either. It's kind of a middle path. Be firm and, at the same time, gentle.

Choose a conducive atmosphere and be regular in your practice

You should choose a nice, clean place for your regular sitting, on something that is a non-conductor of electricity. You may have heard of Yogis in India who sit on a wooden platform or on a certain grass that does not conduct any electricity. This, more or less, acts as insulation from the gravita-

tional force of the earth. Have you seen pictures of Yogis sitting on animal skins? They didn't kill those animals for the skins; they just used what was available. For forest Yogis, it was natural to use a dry, tanned skin, like the non-conducting gloves you might wear when handling electricity. Often, they chose tiger and deer skins. It is believed that if you sit on a deerskin and meditate, you will acquire all the aesthetic beauties, the charms of life, and liberation, too. If you sit on a tiger skin, you will get all the *siddhis*, or attainments and supernatural powers. Tiger skin brings power because the skin also has its own vibration. If the animal has died naturally, the skin will still have the quality or the nature of the animal. If you use a deer skin, you get the soft or gentle nature of the deer. Even if you wear a dress with the pattern of a tiger, you walk like a tiger. Immediately, you feel that you are a tiger yourself. It's thought association.

Unfortunately, those old practices have descended to a low level today. Many people want to meditate on an animal skin, and this has been propagated by the people who are selling the skins. Certainly, you can't get helpful qualities from animals that have been slaughtered. I personally don't like to use a skin for meditation. I don't know whether the animal has been killed or if it died naturally. If I buy it, I will be encouraging people to kill more. I would suggest a clean, white sheet, folded over a blanket or carpet. Use this only for your meditation practice and it will built up wonderful vibrations.

Prepare the body

Preparing the body for meditation is also important. In meditation you are trying to keep the mind steady and one-pointed without shaking too much. To do this, you begin by making the body steady. This is possible only if you make a firm decision. Just tell the body and the limbs, "I'm not going to move

any part of the body until I finish the meditation." The decision you make will be heard by every cell in your body. If the decision is very strong, the body will obey you without complaining. Imagine your mind and body as little children. If you want them to obey, you must be a little firm.

It's best to sit in a cross-legged posture. Sit straight. Keep the spine erect but not stiff. Spread the chest well. Beginners may find this position easier if they sit on the edge of a firm cushion. If this isn't possible, it's all right to use a chair, but keep the spine free by not leaning back on it.

It's normal to feel some pain in a cross-legged position when you begin. Slowly, slowly, you will get over it. The minute you feel the pain, change the position of your legs. Sit some other way that's more com-

fortable for you and continue your meditation. This doesn't mean that you should avoid sitting or meditating. Each day, sit to that point where you feel the pain, then shift to another position. You can even get up while meditating and walk around a little. Then, sit a while longer. Once you find the real center of gravity—your equilibrium—you'll have victory over the position and be seated in a steady and comfortable pose. Build your meditation little by little.

How long should you sit? If it's a deep meditation, five or ten minutes is enough. If it's not deep, stay longer. Begin by sitting for fifteen minutes. In fifteen days, you can easily sit twenty minutes each time. Twenty will become twenty-five, then thirty. Nothing is built in one day. Everyone who has learned to meditate has gone through these same steps.

Use your intelligence

If in meditation you are sometimes bothered by intruding thoughts or desires, sometimes the best thing to do is to meditate on the very desire itself. Of course, you can first

try to ignore it. But that might not work. A simple example: you are in a room and you are doing something intensely. All of a sudden, somebody walks in without an appointment. You look at him out of the corner of your eye and realize that this is not the time to see him or that he is not desirable now. You could say, "Don't come in without an appointment—get out!" Then he won't be going away happily. You are making an enemy. He might bang the door as he leaves and go outside and shout. If you reject a strong desire, it won't go away but will wait for another opportunity to pounce on you when you are a bit weak. Don't force it out.

If you know that someone is there, don't even look at him. Seem to be very busy, deeply interested in something. Even when he says, "Sir?" you do not seem to hear him. You are very busy. Get even more involved in your concentration. He will wait some time, then say, "I see. She seems to be very busy. I will come another time." And he'll walk out.

On the other hand, if he's persistently waiting for your attention—even beyond your patience—then turn to him, "Yes, sir, what can I do for you?" Analyze the desire. If you can't do what he wants right away, tell him, "Yes, I will certainly do that, but not just now. Come again another time." By analyzing it, you can either dispose of the desire or settle the matter quickly. Suppose you are meditating and you feel the desire to eat or go to the movies, a desire that you can't ignore. Then face it: "All right, you want to take me to the movies. How many films have we seen lately? With what benefit? What's new today? Will this be greater benefit than that from meditation?" Analyze, argue, educate the desire itself. "Well, I see that the benefit from the film is not so great," it will say. "Then why can't you wait? I will certainly oblige you sometime later, maybe tomorrow." Don't always be so adamant. It's necessary to give in a

little now and then. But you can't give in for anything and everything. If something gentle is desired, give in.

It's like giving in to a little coffee once in a while. I usually advise people that coffee and tea are not too good because of the stimulants in them. But if someone feels a coffee desire in the morning, he can still give in a little. "You want coffee? All right, I'll give you some." Heat a cup of milk. Put a little coffee in it. The mind is satisfied. It had coffee.

Treat your mind like somebody who is a little naughty and wants this and that. Use your intelligence. Educate your mind. Argue with it. Don't just give in to everything. Once in a while let it run. All these are just tricks, but they are very useful in training the mind.

Active and passive meditation

As you continue your practice, you will experience different degrees of accomplishment. In Hindu scriptures, the Lord says, "Fix your mind on Me alone. Let your thoughts dwell on Me. You will hereafter live in Me alone." That's perfect Yoga and the highest form of worship. If you're not yet able to fix your mind one-pointed on God, then when the mind wavers, bring it back again and again and again to Him. This is the next best practice—concentration—that leads to steady meditation. If you're not yet able to practice this, just keep doing things, but while doing them, say, "I'm doing them for You." When you get the results, at least give a little to Him.

If you can't just sit and meditate, don't despair. Get up and do something. Get into something. It's like trying to sleep. If you can't fall asleep, don't just roll around in bed. Get up and do something until you feel sleepy. Then, when you go to bed, you'll sleep easily.

Not everybody is interested in sitting and meditation. Many active people can't do it. That's all right. There's still a meditation

Educate your mind.

for them. It's called Karma Yoga, meditation in action. Even when you're physically doing something, your aim can be meditation. After all, what is meditation? Focusing your entire mind on what you are doing. If you think of your friend or your business when you wash a dish, the dish can't be washed clean. You might leave a spot on it. So, doing one thing at a time and doing it well is a form of physical meditation.

Sitting is a mental meditation. You allow the body to relax while you sit and do everything with the mind. Sit quietly. Focus the mind on the object you have chosen or just repeat a *mantra*. Do nothing else. Forget everything. To hear the inner sound, close your ears, eyes, and mouth and listen to the sound of life within. Be still physically and mentally. Be totally relaxed. Then, simply look and listen for something within. Don't open your eyes but try to feel something vibrating within you. You don't need to do anything. Instead, be completely still and watch what's happening within. You'll enjoy that.

You may combine the *mantra* with the breath in any way that is comfortable, either splitting the *mantra* sounds on the incoming and outgoing breath or doing one repetition with the inhalation and another with the exhalation. If you watch carefully, you can feel the breath saying the *mantra*. Then, you can stop repeating it and just listen for that. This needs the complete attention of an indrawn mind.

As the breath comes in, feel it going deeply to strike at the base of the spine. Then, as it comes out, feel it roll upward through the spine to the crown of the head. Don't feel the breath flowing out through the nostrils. In the beginning, it might be difficult to follow the breath up and down the spine, and you will just feel it coming in and out of the body. But, after a few months'

practice, you will be able to follow the breath along the spine. As your meditation gets deeper, you can feel the breath and energy moving upward to strike at the top of the head. If you carefully observe the path along the spine, you will be able to feel a very mild heat or a gentle warmth that is very pleasant. Try not to miss that. Once you feel it, put your entire attention on it.

Following the breath

The purpose of following the breath is to become conscious of the psychic energy traveling along the spine, passing through the *chakras*, or spiritual centers. These nerve

plexuses, located along the spinal column, can be used as a focus for your mental gaze during meditation. However, it's inadvisable to keep the mind focused on the lower *chakras*. If you become aware of a warmth there, feel it

but don't allow the mind to become fixed there. Bring the mind to one of the higher centers, such as the heart or eyebrow center. Draw the energy upward.

All the psychic nerve centers meet at a place between the eyebrows—not outside, but deep within, almost at the central part of the skull; to be precise, at the location of your pineal and pituitary glands, which are called Siva and Shakti in yogic symbolism. They have the bull as a vehicle—the thyroid gland. Siva rides the bull, so we say that he is the Commander-in-Chief, since the thyroid commands the whole system. It is a replica of the whole body itself. You may choose to focus your meditation either in the loving heart center or at the central tower between the brows, which is the location of the holy of holies, or *sanctum sanctorum*.

Knowing what to expect

Sometimes in meditation you may hear a subtle humming sound. But when you try

to hear it better, it disappears. It's like a lover. If you see her, she won't see you. But if you keep on doing something, she will look at you. When you hear that hum, that's the sign of true love. The sound of the God in you loves you when you are not aware of it. It's not that you shouldn't be aware, but the moment you become aware, you become a little excited or frightened and disturb the serenity out of which the hum is generated. It's like seeing your face reflected in a large basin of water. As soon as you see the beautiful face there, you may reach for it, disturbing the calm surface and causing the reflection to disappear. Just wait patiently. Keep looking. Slowly, you will begin to see the face again.

So, know what might happen in meditation. Then, when it happens, you won't be

excited or anxious to have more, both of which disturb the mind.

You may wonder, is this really the cosmic sound I am hearing? Even if it's your imagination, there's no harm in that. Even if it's an illusion, it's better than other illusions. You are not imagining a demon, but something nice. Ultimately, you become what you imagine. Until you actually see or hear something, you have to begin with imagination. Later, it will come by itself—maybe a little different from how you imagined it. Don't think that these experiences are illusions.,

To come out of meditation, slowly increase the duration of your inhalation and exhalation. Make the breath longer. Feel the air flowing out through your nostrils. Inhale and exhale deeply a few times.

OM Shanthi, Shanti, Shanti. ■





MEDITATION

by Sri Swami Sivananda

Leading a virtuous life is not, by itself, sufficient for God-realization. Concentration of mind is absolutely necessary.

A good, virtuous life only prepares the mind as a fit instrument for concentration and meditation. It is concentration and meditation that eventually lead to Self-realization. Without the help of meditation, you cannot attain Knowledge of the Self.

Without its aid, you cannot grow into the divine state. Without it, you cannot liberate yourself from the trammels of the mind and attain immortality.

What is meditation?

Meditation is the keeping up of an unceasing flow of God-consciousness. All worldly thoughts are shut out from the mind. The mind is filled or saturated with divine thoughts, divine glory, and divine presence.

Meditation is the seventh rung or step in the ladder of Yoga. Yogins call this *dhyana*.

Forget the body. Forget the surroundings. Forgetting is the highest *sadhana* [spiritual practice]. It helps meditation a great deal. It makes the approach to God easier. By remembering God, you can forget all these things.

Lord Jesus says, "Empty thyself and I shall fill thee." This corresponds to the teaching of Patanjali Maharshi: "Yoga is annihilation of all mental functions." This emptying process, or making the mind blank, is, no doubt, a trying discipline. But, continued practice of an intense type will bring success. There is no doubt of this.

It is concentration and meditation that eventually lead to Self-realization.

In a big city, there is much bustle and sound at 8 pm. At 9 o'clock, there is not so much bustle and sound. At 10 pm, it is still more reduced; and at 11 pm, it is much less.

At 1 am, there is peace everywhere. Even so, in the beginning of yogic practices, there are countless *vrittis* [thought waves] in the mind. There is much agitation and tossing in the mind. Gradually, the thought-wave subsides. In the end, all mental modifications are controlled. The Yogi enjoys perfect peace.

What happens during meditation

In meditation, new grooves are formed in the brain and the mind moves upwards in the new spiritual grooves. When the mind becomes steady in meditation the eyeballs also become steady. A Yogi whose mind is calm will have a steady eye. There will be no winking at all. The eyes will be lustrous red or pure white.

When you enter into very deep, silent meditation, the breath will not come out of the nostrils. There may be occasional, slow movement of the lungs and the abdomen. In profound and continued meditation, thinking ceases. There is only one idea of *Aham Brahmasmi* [I am Brahman]. When this idea also is given up, *nirvikalpa samadhi* [superconscious state where mental modifications cease to exist] or *sahaja-advaita-nishtha* [by nature established in the non-dual state of superconsciousness] ensues. Just as salt melts in water, the *sattvic* [pure] mind melts in silence in Brahman, its substratum.

Reasons for failure in meditation

There is always a complaint amongst the aspirants: "I have been meditating for the last twelve years. I have not made any improvement. I have no Realization." Why is it so? What is the reason? They have not plunged themselves into deep meditation, into the innermost recesses of their hearts. They have not properly saturated the mind with thoughts of God. They have not done regular, systematic *sadhana*. They have not disciplined the *indriyas* [senses] perfectly. They have not collected all the outgoing rays of the mind. They have not made the self-determination, "I will realize this very second." They have not given the full hundred percent of the mind—their full mind—to God.

If the meditator has divine thoughts for ten minutes and, then, worldly, conflicting thoughts for the next ten minutes, that person will not succeed in getting at the divine consciousness. You must run after one rabbit only with vigor, strength, and one-pointedness. You are sure to catch it. You must have only divine thoughts at all times. Then, you are sure to realize God soon.

You must not be too hasty in longing for the fruits at once when you take to meditation. A young lady perambulated the *asvattha* tree a hundred and eight times for getting an offspring and then immediately touched her abdomen to see whether there was a child or not. It is simply foolishness. She will have to wait for some months. Even so, if you meditate regularly for some time, then the mind will be ripened and, eventually, you will get *atma-sakshatkara*, or Self-realization. Haste makes waste.

Benefits of Meditation

Meditation acts as a powerful tonic. The divine energy freely flows from the feet of the Lord to the different systems of the *sadhakas* [spiritual seekers]. The holy vi-

brations penetrate all the cells of the body and cure the diseases of the body. Those who meditate save doctors' bills.

Meditation helps a lot in checking various emotions and impulses. If you can regulate your emotions and moods, you will not do foolish and wrong actions.

If you wind the watch at night, it will run smoothly for twenty-four hours. Even so, if you meditate for one or two hours in

the *brahma-muhurta* [the early morning hours most conducive to spiritual practice], you can work very peacefully throughout the day. Nothing can disturb your mind. The

whole system will be charged with the spiritual vibrations or divine waves.

Regular meditation opens the avenues of intuitional knowledge, makes the mind calm and steady, awakens an ecstatic feeling, and brings the yogic student in contact with the source of the Supreme Purusha. If there are doubts, they are all cleared by themselves when you march steadily on the path of *Dhyana Yoga*.

Meditation develops strong and pure thoughts. Mental images are clear-cut and well-defined. Good thoughts are well-grounded. Through clarification of ideas, confusion vanishes. You will yourself feel the way to place your footsteps on the next rung of the spiritual ladder. A mysterious inner voice will guide you. Hear this attentively.

The fire of meditation annihilates all foulness due to vice. The, suddenly, comes knowledge, or divine wisdom, which directly leads to *mukti*, or final emancipation.

Meditate. Meditate. Do not lose even a single minutes. Meditation will remove all the miseries of life. That is the only way. ■

A mysterious inner voice will guide you. Hear this attentively.

**...Serve, Love, Give,
Purify, Meditate, Realize...
—Master Sivananda**

MEDITATION, CREATIVITY AND WRITING

by Rev. Kumari de Sachy



Human beings are by their very nature poets. They make. They create. In fact, the word "poet" comes from the Greek verb *poietes*, meaning "one who makes."

In *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, writer Jacques Maritain concluded:

Poetic knowledge is as natural to the spirit of man as the return of the bird to his nest and it is the universe which, together with the spirit, makes it sway back to the mysterious nest of the soul. For the content of poetic intuition is both the reality of the things of the world and the subjectivity of the poet, both obscurely conveyed through an intentional or spiritualized emotion. The soul is known in the experience of the world and the world is known in the experience of the soul, though a knowledge which does not know itself. For such knowledge knows not in order to know, but in order to produce. It is toward creation that it tends.

While creativity is surely our birthright, in some it seems to burst forth naturally; in others it must be fostered. Even established writers, those individuals who seem to be

**Human beings are by
their very nature poets.**

mystically imbued with more than their share of creative power, recognize that the development of introspection is essential to the creative process. Across time and space, some of these writers have chosen meditation as a way into the psyche. For example, Scottish essayist and historian Thomas Carlyle wrote in the nineteenth century,

Of our thinking, we might say, it is but the mere upper surface that we shape into articulate thoughts; underneath the region of argument and conscious discourse, lies the *region of meditation* (italics mine); here, in its quiet mysterious depths, dwells what vital force is in us; here if aught is to be created, and not merely manufactured and communicated, must the work go on.

Also in the nineteenth century, British poet William Wordsworth, in a famous passage included in his "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads," recalled:

Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived, but *habits of meditation* (italics mine) have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a purpose. If this opinion be erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a Poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. . .

And in his "Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads," Wordsworth wrote that poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility," a process that might be described as discursive meditation.

Wordsworth was a meditative man. And there were other literary figures, contemporaries of Wordsworth on this side of the Atlantic, who were also meditative men. For example, the Transcendalist philosophy embraced by such luminaries as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau, and Walt Whitman, recognized the benefits and advocated the practice of meditation.

For example, Thoreau, in the conclusion of *Walden* (Chapter XVIII), advised the reader to introspect, to explore the mysterious realms of his or her own mind before journeying to the exotic, faraway environs of the external world:

Direct your eye right inward, and
you'll find
A thousand regions in your mind
Yet undiscovered. Travel them and be
expert in home-cosmography.

And Emerson, in a poem entitled "My Thoughts," accurately—and humorously—described the meditation technique where the meditator becomes the "witness" of his or her own thought process, observing the thoughts objectively, without judging or repressing them, watching them appear and disappear.

Many are the thoughts that come to me
In my lonely musings;
And they drift so strange and swift.
There's no time for choosing
Which to follow, for to leave
Any, seems a loosing.

When they come, they come in flocks,
As on glancing feather,
Startled birds rise one by one
In Autumnal weather.

Some so merry that I laugh,

Some so grave and serious,
Some so trite, their least approach
Is enough to weary us:—

Others flit like midnight ghosts,
Shrouded and mysterious.

There are thoughts that o'er me steal
Like the day when dawning;
Great thoughts winged with melody
Common utterance scorning,
Moving in an inward tune,
And an inward morning.

Some have dark and drooping wings,
Children all of sorrow;
Some are as gay, as if to-day
Could see no cloudy morrow,—
And yet, like light and shade, they each
Must from the other borrow.

One by one they come to me
On their destined mission;
One by one I see them fade
With no hopeless vision;
For they've led me on a step
To their home Elysian.

In "My Thoughts" Emerson also eloquently described, in a sense recreated, the phenomenon that Freud referred to as "free association," an activity that takes place during meditation as well as during psychoanalysis. According to psychiatrist Lawrence Kubie, free association is also part of the creative process. In stanza two of "My Thoughts," we witness this process of association at work as one word leads to another: "flocks" takes us to "feather," which extends the metaphor to the "Startled birds," and so on. Moreover, in the penultimate stanza, Emerson alludes not only to the notion that without darkness there can be no light, without pain no pleasure, but also to the idea that a gloomy thought is the other side of a gay one and vice versa.

Another eminent meditator-writer, the late nineteenth-century American poet, Walt

Whitman, celebrated meditation in a very short poem called "Memories," from *Leaves of Grass*.

How sweet the silent backward tracings!

The wanderings as in dreams—the meditation

of old times resumed—their loves, joys, persons, voyages.

And in the first stanza of a poem called "All is Truth," Whitman recaptured in poetic form a meditation technique that requires the meditator to concentrate on a particular object, concrete or abstract, focusing on all facets of the object, contemplating its various dimensions in order to perceive its essential nature. In this poem the narrator meditates on a surprising poetic theme: the nature of lying:

Meditating among liars and retreating sternly into myself

I see that there are really no liars or lies after all,

And that nothing fails its perfect return, and that what are called lies are perfect returns,

And that each thing exactly represents itself and what has preceded it.

Concentrating on the nature of lying, the narrator discovers that the lie is not different from but is, in its own perfect nature, essentially the same as the truth. The true nature of the object of meditation, in this case the lie, has revealed itself to the meditative poet-narrator.

The importance of meditation to the creative process is punctuated by a more contemporary writer, twentieth-century American poet Wallace Stevens, in his poem aptly titled "The World as Meditation." The subject of this poem is Penelope, loyal wife of the Greek hero, Odysseus, who meditates on her long-absent husband. The poem's narrator recounts that "The trees had been

mended, as an essential exercise," "In an inhuman meditation, larger than her own," suggesting that the Creator is also a Meditator. This poem also includes an epigraphic passage by Georges Enesco. Translated from the French, the epigraph reads:

I have spent too much time working at my violin, traveling. But the essential exercise of the composer—meditation—was never suspended in me. . . I saw a permanent dream, which stops neither night nor day.

For Stevens, as well as for Enesco, meditation is part of and basic to the creative process.

Two currently popular American writers, Madeleine L'Engle and Robert Bly also consider meditation to be an essential element in the creative process and both use meditation in conjunction with their writing. L'Engle, who also serves as head librarian at the Cathedral of St. John Divine in New York, meditates in order to open herself to revelation. In *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art*, L'Engle writes that her imagination is often aroused by the explorers and discoverers of the scientific world:

. . . when I try to find contemporary, twentieth century mystics to help me in my own search for meditation, I turn to the cellular biologists and astrophysicists, for they are dealing with the nature of being itself, and their questions are theological ones: What is the nature of time? of creation? of life? What is human creativity?

L'Engle also meditates on the material recorded in her journals, which she has been keeping since age nine. She recommends journal writing beginning at an early age as a way to gain self-knowledge. And she meditates on biblical stories. One evening, meditating on the stories of Lot and Sarah, Abraham and Isaac, she experienced a revelation of divine love in what

she refers to as a "Special Dream," a dream that enters into waking consciousness, bringing her the gift of epiphany.

Madeleine L'Engle also meditates on a *mantra*. In her book, *And It Was Good*, she explains that the use of a *mantra* is not, as some people might think, contrary to Christian dogma. Herself a Christian, L'Engle offers the Jesus Prayer as an example of a Christian *mantra*. Known as *kyrie eleison* in Greek, in English the familiar Jesus Prayer is usually translated as "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," and it is repeated continuously to reach a contemplative state—the practice that in Yoga is called *mantra Japa* or *Japa Yoga*. Echoing the yogic teachings and the experiences of those who practice *mantra Japa*, L'Engle states that when we repeat a *mantra*, it becomes part of our life's rhythm. She writes, "When I wake up at night, it comes bubbling up into my conscious mind like a little fountain. . ."

Like Madeline L'Engle, Robert Bly also practices meditation. Bly reports that meditation is particularly important to his composing process because it promotes the integration of the female/male principles of the psyche. It is this integration that Bly seeks to express in and through his writing. He explains that before writing, when he feels a need to harmonize the male/female principles, he feels first "a need for solitude and then a need for meditation."

In a short poem, "Walking and Sitting," from *The Tree Will be Here for a Thousand Years*, Bly simply describes the first stage of meditation, when the meditator attempts to focus the mind on one thing:

That's odd—I am trying to sit still,
trying to hold the mind to one thing.
Outdoors angleworms stretched out thin
in the gravel, which it is thundering

To someone who meditates, this poem, in its brevity and simplicity, perfectly captures the paradoxical nature of meditation that is, the task seems so simple—to fix the mind on one thing—yet one realizes very quickly just how difficult it is to keep both mind and body still for even a short period. The poem illustrates the restless nature of the mind; how in a split second a diverting thought or image pops up; and how little control we have over our thought process, at least until we have become experienced meditators.

In conclusion, we have looked at the work of several successful writers, past and present, for whom meditation played/plays an important role in the composing process. Surely these writers do not share a common meditation practice, nor do they exhibit similar writing styles; but their work reveals that meditation can be used effectively as a method to stimulate creativity.

Generally speaking, no matter what your station in life, whether you are an artist, a businessperson, a builder, a teacher, a monk, or a householder, whether you are young or old, meditation—focusing the mind, concentrating, and becoming one with the object of contemplation—is an essential ingredient in the creative process, a process in which we are all involved, in one way or another. For the creative process is synonymous with life itself. ■

*It matters not if you live the life of a householder, only you must
fix your mind on God. Do your work with one hand and hold the
feet of the Lord with the other. When you have no work in the
world to do, hold His feet fast to your heart with both your hands.*

—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa

SANT KABIR: A PRINCE AMONG MYSTICS

by Sadhu Vaswani

Sant Kabir was born in 1440. This was a trying period in India's history. In the days of Kabir, Sikandar Lodhi sat on the throne in Delhi. It was he who destroyed Hindu temples in Banaras, shut down Hindu schools, closed Hindu *ashramas* and converted by force many Hindus to Islam. It is true, as Shelly says somewhere, "power poisons the hand of him who touches it."

In such a dark period of history appeared a number of mighty souls in different parts of India: Chaitanya in Bengal, Narsi Mehta in Gujarat, Vidyapati in Bihar, and Guru Nanak and Kabir in the north of India. They all worked for a new movement, the *bhakti* movement.

In the fifteenth century, Ramananda, in Banaras, taught the consoling doctrine: "God loveth all!" Ramananda, Kabir's Guru, not only taught this doctrine, but he also admitted outcastes to his *satsang*, his spiritual community. Sena the barber, Dhana the peasant, Raidas the cobbler, Kabir the Muslim weaver, all were among the disciples of this great saint, Ramananda.

Kabir had illumination directly from the Spirit. He was not a man of books; he was a man of meditation. "I know," he said, "that reading is good, but better than reading is meditation!" Kabir looked within. He read the book of the heart. He opened the scripture of the soul, and he received of the Holy Spirit. And he sang of the hidden Secret in the heart. Said Kabir: "I gather not leaves; I worship not idols/But the blessing of the Holy Name is in my heart!"

Yes, Kabir was a saint and a singer of the Holy Spirit. Kabir's songs are a rich synthesis of Hindu thought and Muslim mysticism. Into his life flowed, as Ganga and Jammna, the

inspiration alike of Rama and Allah. In one of his songs, this master poet, this *shromani* (chief) of the saints, sangeth thus:

I am a child of Rama and Allah.
I accept all gurus and pirs.
Call Him Rama, if you like:
Call Him Allah. One thing I know—
I live by His Blessed Name.
Lifeless to me are all the imates:
For I have called to them, again and again,
And I know they cannot speak.
I have called to them: they cannot answer!

"Religion," said Kabir, "is adoration of the One." And this One transcends all temples and mosques. This One is above all idols and castes, all pilgrimages and baths in holy streams. "What availeth," asked Kabir, "your pilgrimage to Kashi and Mathura and Dwarka? What availeth your bath in a holy stream if there is no reality in your heart?" Kabir's was the voice of a mystic who asked us to rise to a new vision of life and so to rise above all creeds, all ritualism.

This One is the Real. And the Real, the One, Kabir said, "is in your home. Why wander, why go from one shrine to another? Enter within! Go not elsewhere! Your home is in the heart. Your rites and creeds are empty. You will find not in emptiness. Be strong, brother! [sic] Be strong and find Him in the fullness of the heart within you!"

It is this emphasis on the heart that fills the songs of Kabir with a strange appeal to the man [sic] in the street. It is this emphasis on the heart that makes Kabir a prince among the mystics of humanity. ■

—reprinted from Kabir: Singer of the Holy Spirit



MEDITATION

Just for a moment

let me loosen these tangled vines of effort

to hold happiness,

remain a moment

between relentless waves of longing for more,

accept this present gift

that slips between the fingers of that

reaching hand,

bathe in this quiet pool,

naked white moon awake.

Why wear these clothes again?

—Swami Ramananda

MEDITATION AND THE 12-STEP PROGRAM

by **Jaya Coleman**



The original twelve steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous program are as follows:

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable;
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity;
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him;
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves;
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs;
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character;
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our short comings;
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all;
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others;
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it;
11. Sought, through prayer and meditation, to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and

the power to carry that out;

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The above twelve steps promote healthy relationships, as well as non-attachment. The first three steps reflect a relationship with a higher power, or higher consciousness; the next four express a relationship with the self; and the next two steps concern our relationships with others, specifically, aligning ourselves with a higher power before we can experience healthy relationships with others. The last three are daily maintenance steps.

Recovery of the self by adherence to the principles expressed in these twelve steps has been experienced by millions of people worldwide in recovery programs that help people overcome many types of addictions, including addiction to alcohol, food, nicotine, caffeine, and other drugs, as well as addiction to gambling, work and sex. These recovery programs go by many names, for example, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Co-Dependants anonymous, Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families, etc.

The main premise of the 12-Step Program is the commitment to honesty, open-mindedness and willingness to look at a new way of life, a new belief system, and to surrender to this new way in order to recover the essence of self and to live life on life's terms with joy and freedom.

The 12-Step Program was developed by

Bill Wilson and Bob Smith, founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. Inspired by the work of psychologists Carl Jung and William James and by a religious group known as the Oxford Group, Wilson and Smith came to realize that in order to overcome addiction, or attachment, one had to surrender one's ego to a power higher than oneself in order to stop the ego from taking charge. In essence, they realized that non-attachment was the key to alleviating addiction

and, what's more, that meditation was a useful tool to employ as part of the process. As listed above, the eleventh step of the Twelve-Step recovery program states, "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our con-

scious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out." In most 12-Step programs, the emphasis is on the seeking of "conscious contact"—the process, not the end result, which usually tends to take care of itself as long as the process, that is, the practice of meditation and prayer, take place. Prayer and meditation are spoken of as talking to God or to some type of Higher Power and listening to this Higher Power. The meditation practice involves listening, that is to say, concentrating on the "here and now," whether it be reading a daily spiritual message or any other form of concentration that quiets the

"mind stuff," as Patanjali describes it in the *Yoga Sutras*. The focus of awareness can be anything from doing the very best you can do in the moment, whether it be chopping veggies in the kitchen, cleaning the bathroom, or being in relationship with another person, or formally sitting for meditation.

12-Step programs leave the specifics up to the individual, allowing individuals to choose what works best for them. Each

individual is left on his or her own to discover, through dialogue with others or through reading about different types of meditation techniques, to experience what works best. Also interesting to note is that the commitment to medita-

tion is stated in the eleventh step, meaning that one must work through the previous steps in order to reach this one successfully.

Finally, the 12-Step programs teach that emotional stability develops through the daily practice of meditation, through which we come to experience freedom from the influences of the external world and from the mind stuff that keeps us attached/addicted to negative substances and behaviors. And, as mentioned earlier, this step involves not only the commitment to practice meditation and prayer, but, importantly, it involves the commitment to a new way of life, especially developing a deeper relationship with the Higher Power. ■

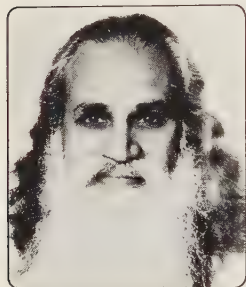
...in order to overcome addiction, or attachment, one had to surrender one's ego to a power higher than oneself in order to stop the ego from taking charge.

Meditation is the only royal road to the attainment of salvation or moksha [liberation]. It is a mysterious ladder which reaches from earth to heaven, from error to truth, from darkness to light, from pain to bliss, from restlessness to abiding peace, from ignorance to knowledge, from mortality to immortality.

—Sri Swami Sivananda

YOGA AND HEALTH

by Sri Swami Satchidananda



Question: Does meditation help me in my physical, emotional, and all other areas of growth?

Sri Gurudev: It does. In meditation you learn your own limita-

tions. You come to understand your deficiencies and, at the same time, you strengthen your mind. In meditation, you will strengthen your mind more because the mind is made one-pointed.

However, meditation alone is not enough. When you realize your deficiencies through meditation, you must try to rectify your life. Your way of life is also important. If you know that there is some problem and you see just what it is in your life that is creating the problem, you should try to avoid that situation. Mere knowing is not enough. For example, if you know that you have a headache, knowing it won't cure it. You should know what caused the headache and stay away from that. Then, find out what you should do to cure the headache.

Prevention and cure—both are necessary. Cure for the present; prevention for the future. Sometimes, you don't bother at all about prevention. You don't even think of the reason for the illness. So you only cure it and, then, you do the same thing. Again, it comes. Again, you cure it. Who gains by that? Drugstores and doctors. You don't gain anything much if you don't understand the problem and don't practice prevention. Thus, meditation helps you in both ways: in understanding

your present level and your difficulties and also in developing the will of the mind. In a way, during meditation, you are even able to communicate with the Higher Will, or God if you want to refer to it in that way.

So, yes, meditation is a very important practice for our growth.

Question: I started meditating several weeks ago. I meditate for about an hour each night. I get severe, convulsive reactions during meditation. Why is this? What's happening?

Sri Gurudev: Sometimes, this is natural. These reactions are in fact convulsions but not in the sense of disease. They are contractions of the muscular system due to the flowing of the energy.

When you are regulating your energy during meditation, the energy seems to travel, and until it gets adjusted, it will travel here and there. So when the energy travels fast, your body jerks. It's just a natural jerking of the body. Sometimes, it may even lift the whole body and throw you around. That's why the more deeply you are into your meditation, the more you should be careful. That means, don't place anything around you that might hurt you. For example, don't even light a candle very close to you, for you may even fall on the candle itself. Keep yourself free. At least when you begin to feel some sort of movement, jerks in the body, you should be careful about the environment.

It's all very natural. When the mind gets that calm, all your *prana* [vital energy] begins to move around, to get realigned. And until it gets realigned and finds a peaceful balance, you are sure to experience these jerky movements. Sometimes, it even makes

you jump up. Some people call that a *siddhi* [a power], lifting yourself. It's not a big *siddhi*. It's natural if you go into deep meditation. But if you consciously practice to jump up, you can do that also by vehemently practicing *pranayama* [breathing practices]; you can literally make your *prana* run in trots and gallops, and that lifts the whole body. That is what you call flying *siddhi*. But it won't help you to go to San Francisco without a plane ticket!

Yes. Don't get confused by all those things. In the beginning, some mild twitchings will happen. A twitching of the face muscles, nose muscle, ear muscle, a little bit here and there. Certainly, those who deeply meditate would have faced these situations. Some sort of creeping sensations, particularly along the spine, like a small ant creeping up. It's all the flow of energy. But don't get frightened. It will all get settled. And to get it settled soon, you should be careful in your daily habits of eating, drinking, and other things, also. That's very important. If your body is naturally soft and serene and relaxed, then these jerks will stop soon. Otherwise, if there are a lot of toxins and blocks when the energy travels around, the energy hits against these and this causes more jerking. That's why we say that even meditation and Hatha Yoga cannot help you

much if you don't have the proper day-to-day discipline in your activities of eating, drinking, and so forth. That's why I say that the sensual life should be well disciplined.

Eating the wrong food and eating a lot, drinking the wrong drinks, drinking too much, smoking a lot, even indulging in more sexual activities, all these activities will create many problems in the body. And if you begin to meditate, the energy will get blocked here and there, affecting the body more. Sometimes, if the practice is too serious, not only will it create jerking, but it will also tear out certain parts of the body. It will even rupture certain blood vessels; it has happened to many people. Sometimes, it knocks at your brain, so that instead of becoming an enlightened person, you end up in an insane asylum.

So meditation is a good practice, but preparation for meditation in your daily life is also very important. And that is what we call Integral Yoga, taking care of every aspect of the individual. You cannot just simply ignore many parts of your life and simply take care of one. That type of development will become one-sided, and it won't bring much benefit.

I wish everyone a good, perfect, healthy body, a peaceful mind, and a useful life. OM Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthi. ■

To satisfy the necessities of life is not evil. To keep the body in good health is a duty, for otherwise, we shall not be able to trim the lamp of wisdom and keep our mind strong and clear.

—Buddha

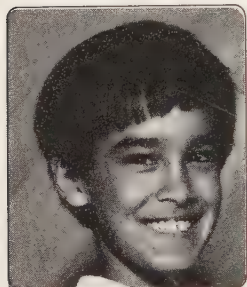
You are what you eat: "Just as in the churning of curd, its fine particles rise up and are transformed into butter, so when food is consumed, the subtlest part rises up and is transformed into mind.

—Chandogya Upanishad

VIDYALAYAM CORNER

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

By Prabhu Adie



The following is the final installment of the nineteen-page biography of St. Francis composed by Prabhu Adie, son of Parameshwari and Sadasiva

Adie. Prabhu wrote this illustrated biography when he was ten years old.

BROTHER DEATH

One of Francesco's disciples, a rich farmer, gave Francesco a mountain. Francesco decided to go to the mountain with Brother Leo to pray.

One day, while Francesco was praying on the mountain, a golden light appeared in the sky and with it came a huge, beautiful angel carrying Jesus in her arms. All this time, brother Leo had been watching, and when the angel left, Brother Leo noticed that Francesco had gotten the *stigmata*. When Leo was carrying Francesco down the mountain, Francesco said to him, "I do not want you to tell anybody about the *stigmata*."

At Portiuncula, there was a Brother called Elias. Brother Elias loved material things, and every chance he had, he would ask Francesco, "Why don't we build a library and a big monastery. That way, when all the Brothers Minor come, they will have somewhere to stay." Francesco would always say, "Brother Elias, do you remember

the promise that you made? Therefore, we cannot own anything." But Brother Elias kept asking him, and, finally, Francesco said, "Okay; I'll go to the Pope and ask him what I have done wrong." So, Francesco had to be carried to Rome on a donkey, and it was very painful for him.

Meanwhile, at Portiuncula, Brother Elias saw his chance and began talking to everybody, saying, "Why don't we build a great monastery and a library to surprise Brother Francesco." Bernardo and Peter were against it, but everyone else liked the idea, so they started to build a monastery.

In Rome, Francesco went straight to the Pope (because they were good friends) and asked him, "What have I done wrong?" The Pope replied, "You have done nothing wrong, Francesco." So, Francesco went back to Assisi and, on the way, he said to Leo, "Something is not right, Leo." When they got to Portiuncula, Francesco saw the half-finished monastery. He climbed to the top of the monastery and started ripping up the roof.

Francesco was getting old. He would lie on the ground and sing songs. Sometimes, he would ask Leo to play the violin even though Leo could not play. One day Francesco said to Leo, "I would like to taste one of Brother Jacoba's cakes before I die." So Brother Jacoba came and made a delicious cake. After Francesco finished the cake, he said, "Take me outside." Brother Leo took Francesco outside and lay him down, and Francesco started singing. All the animals gathered around him, and Francesco closed his eyes and died. *The End* ■

INTEGRAL YOGA INTERNATIONAL

INTEGRAL YOGA INSTITUTE OF BELGIUM

This June, Devi and Devindra van Hooff-Middel, members of the Integral Yoga Institute of Belgium, visited Yogaville and participated in the Ten-Day Silent Retreat.

During their visit, the van Hooff-Middels reported that the Belgium IYI now has nine teachers. Savitri de Meyer is the Founder-President of the Institute, her husband, Roger, the Treasurer, Karuna Ehlermann is the current President, and Devindra van Hoof-Middel is Secretary.

The Institutes Hatha Yoga classes, Levels I and II, are held at a local tennis club; they are multi-lingual, with instructors teaching in German, Dutch, French and English. Most of the teachers also hold small Hatha classes in their own homes. Also offered are Hatha classes for pregnant women, classes for the physically-challenged, and meditation classes.

Once a month, all join for satsang, which is also held at the tennis club. Every three months, a newsletter goes out, and once or twice a year, the Institute offers a seminar on some aspect of Yoga.

Members of the Belgium IYI come together regularly for meetings to discuss the development of their center and to generate ideas for activities. They work very well together in organizing seminars and other events, and they always make sure to leave time to socialize after their meetings.

Recently, two new members, Nalini and Chitra joined the group. And by the end of the year, Devi and Devindra will be moving to the central German countryside, where they will open a Yoga hotel, bringing the Integral Yoga teachings to seekers in that part of Europe.

INTEGRAL YOGA INSTITUTE OF ELMWOOD PARK, NEW JERSEY

The Elmwood Park IYI, under the direction of Margabhandu Martarano and his dedicated staff, is expanding. The number of Hatha Yoga classes has increased, and the Institute is now in the process of buying a building, which they hope to be moving into during the early part of September.

SATCHIDANANDA ASHRAM — YOGAVILLE

Swami Divyananda Ma, who served for several years as Director of the San Francisco Integral Yoga Institute, as well as Treasurer of the New York Integral Yoga Institute and a manager at the Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville, recently returned from Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, where she served at the Coimbatore Integral Yoga Institute for almost one year. At the Ashram, Divyananda Ma will be working in the Programs Department. ■

There are only three duties for a sannyasi to perform: to love the whole humanity as his own self; to do selfless service; and to meditate.

Meditation is his [sic] duty. Meditation is his [sic] food. Meditation is his [sic] life.

—Sri Swami Sivananda

INTEGRAL YOGA HIGHLIGHTS

GURU POORNIMA 1994

This year, Guru Poornima was celebrated on the weekend of 9 - 10 July. This auspicious event was inaugurated on Friday evening, 8 July, with *akanda japa* chanting that continued all through the night, up until the *puja* that was performed on Saturday morning. Devotees came to Yogaville from all over the world to honor Sri Gurudev and to express their love, devotion and gratitude. After the *puja*, Sri Gurudev blessed us with the following message.

BECOME A HUMBLE INSTRUMENT

It looks like everyone unanimously agrees that they don't know me. It's really true, because I don't know myself. I'm still wondering, "Who am I? Who am I?" I don't do anything. I always say that. Even all the work, I didn't do anything. I don't read; I don't write; I don't think. But what am I?

All I know is that I'm a hollow, holey pipe. Like a flute. It has no music in it; it's simply full of holes, a holey reed, and, somehow, it seems to have picked me out, and it's playing its music—not always great music; sometimes terrible music. But whatever it is, when He plays, He plays. The flute is not responsible for that. So, today you all gathered to give praise to the flute. To make an analogy, it's as though you would take out the pots and pans and spoons and say, "Oh how sweet you are; how tasty you are." Pots and pans and spoons are not tasty. The pudding is somewhere inside. Somebody bakes the pudding, and the spoon puts it in your

mouth. That's all I know. So if you pay any glowing tributes, know that the real person who deserves them is the One who is everywhere, the One who is using me as an instrument.

I'm happy to be a good instrument. I'm happy that He picked me. But I'm also happy if he throws me out. An Indian sage declared, "Lord, I don't even know when it began. You picked me, my body, mind, senses, everything. You made me Your instrument. You are playing your part. As such, You may do good or bad; in the onlookers' eyes, it may look good or bad, but don't make me responsible for that. I'm not responsible for that. You are the doer."

That's my humble teaching; I'm telling the truth. Don't praise me any more. Let all the praise go to the real person who works behind this instrument. Of course, when he picks you as His instrument, or as Her instrument, nothing is impossible for Him to do. He can create miracles. He can impart the greatest wisdom. He can reveal to you the Truth. As it says in the *Gita*, "I salute the Lord, who makes the dumb eloquent and the lame to cross mountains." It's not a surprise or great miracle if He makes the learned man an eloquent man. It is only when he picks a dumb man who cannot even speak and makes him eloquent that He shows His greatness.

It looks like He picked me for that purpose, to show His greatness. And He is ready to work with you if all of you become holey/holy reeds, too. Have total faith, put everything in His hands

Actually, even to say, "Give yourself up into His hands" is not absolutely correct, because who are you to even give up into His hands? You are already in His hands. You don't even have to give Him permission to use you or request Him to use you as His instrument. There are prayers that say, "Make me Your instrument." That seems a little absurd to me, that you are permitting the Lord to make you His instrument. You *are* the instrument. He gave you a body when you didn't even have a body; He gave you senses; He gave the world. And it's all for us to use, to learn lessons from, to enjoy.

The whole creation is our guru. Everything and everybody is our guru. We can learn lessons from everything and everybody. In fact, "thing" or "body" are terms that we really use for our convenience. Everything is everybody, they're all alive; they have bodies and are here to teach us lessons, those of us who want to learn. Keep an open mind. Try to see what everything and everybody is trying to tell you, what the lesson is that you can learn. Then, you are celebrating Guru Poornima every day, every minute. There are millions and trillions of gurus; you are the only learner. There was a great saint who had several gurus. He learned lessons from everything and everybody: an ant was a guru for him; a fisherman was a guru for him; they all can teach lessons. For me the broomstick was a guru. Sometimes in India if you even mention the word "broomstick" in a public gathering, everyone will be offended because a broomstick is just a menial thing. In fact, to show it to somebody is an offense in the worst possible way. But that broomstick can teach you a great lesson.

Once, there was a function like this. Just before everyone gathered in the hall, I came in to see how the hall

was kept. There were two *Karma Yogis* there to clean. They came and bragged about how clean the hall was—absolutely spotless. They had cleaned everything, the whole hall, the stage. You couldn't even see a speck of dust in any nook or corner. They were bragging about that. While they were bragging, we heard a giggling sound from a corner of the hall. We all looked; nobody else was there. Who could it be? So the two continued their bragging, and, again, we heard the sound, this time from a particular corner. They went to see what was happening, but there was nothing but a broomstick in the corner. Normally, you finish cleaning and then put the broomstick in the corner. So, I quietly asked the broomstick, "Are you the one who giggled?" "Yes."

"What made you laugh at us."

"Not at you. I'm laughing at those two."

"Why?"

"Look at me. I'm so dirty. It was I who cleaned the whole thing. By making myself dirty, I cleaned out the dirt from the hall; I accepted the dirt while cleaning the hall. But they are bragging, 'We cleaned it; we did this and that.' What else can human beings do? They brag about everything. They don't want to give due respect or responsibility to the one who did it."

Is not the broomstick correct in saying that? It was the broomstick who collected all the dust on him, and, quietly, he is sitting there, not even claiming to be the one who cleaned everything. Where else can you go to find an example of a great *Karma Yogi*? The real *Karma Yoga* is there.

Do your job. Don't claim any reward for it, not even a "thank you." Your happiness at having done a good job is enough for you; you don't need anyone to pat you on your shoulder. So

the broomstick is a great *Karma Yogi*. Likewise, we should not be different. We're all here, created for some purpose. Everybody is unique in that; none is small or big. We're all equal. We're all made to do our part of the work. In truth, we're not even doing our part. He created me to sit there and to be called a guru, and He created you all to sit there and call yourselves devotees, disciples, admirers. If not, how can we celebrate Guru Poornima? To celebrate Guru Poornima, one has to accept a position. Who knows, perhaps next Guru Poornima somebody else will sit here.

Don't put yourself down or compare yourself with others. All are equally wanted. All are doing their jobs according to the will of God. He made every one of us—and all things—for a purpose. And He is making us do the job. We are not doing it ourselves. He gives the energy, he gives the wisdom, he gives the time, the space.

Even God needs instruments, tools. But the one thing that He did do is that He made us forget that truth. Thousands and thousands of people have forgotten that God is working through them. They are all simply instruments, yet they take the responsibility and the rewards completely for themselves: "I did it." And God says, "Alright; you claim the reward, enjoy it." But are we enjoying it? No. The minute you take responsibility for your doing, you begin to suffer. If it is appreciated, people will praise you and you'll look for more praise, look for every day to be Guru Poornima, looking for offerings. If one year they don't celebrate Guru Poornima here while I'm alive, you should see me fussing and fuming, because I did everything—I should be recognized by everybody.

Even doing good things; if you take the responsibility, you are in trouble. So why is He doing it? Let Him do whatever he wants. Saint

Ramakrishna gave an example. In candlelight somebody takes a pen and forges a check. Another person takes the pen and writes a prayer. The pen is doing the writing. But does the pen get punished for forging the check or praised for writing the prayer. Of course not; it's the hand behind the pen. So the advantage of being an instrument, remembering that you are an instrument in the hands of God, is that you are free from pleasure and pain, praise and blame. You're always peaceful and, as you are peaceful always, you are happy always. No problems. We want to live without any problem. Is that not so? Nobody wants problems. Then why create problems? When somebody is ready to take the problems, why take them on our shoulders? That is what we learn from the creation, from the open book of the world.

Feel that you are an instrument—you don't have to become an instrument. It's ridiculous. You are an instrument! Know that you are an instrument and know that somebody is doing things for you, through you. If that is remembered, you will never have problems. You will always be happy. Saint Ramalingam says that eternally you will be happy; you will never have problems. When? When you know that He is doing it. A Tamil song says: "Lord you are feeding me, I am fed up. You are putting me to sleep, I sleep. You are making me move, I move. Not only me, but the whole creation. What else can I say about it. I just wanted you to know that I know it. You might not know that I know it. In that respect, you seem to be acting as if you don't know. Otherwise, when somebody says, "I did it," You would say, "Stop that nonsense. Did you do it? I did it."

God can say that to us. Is it not so? Everytime we take responsibility on our shoulders, God keeps quiet, as if he

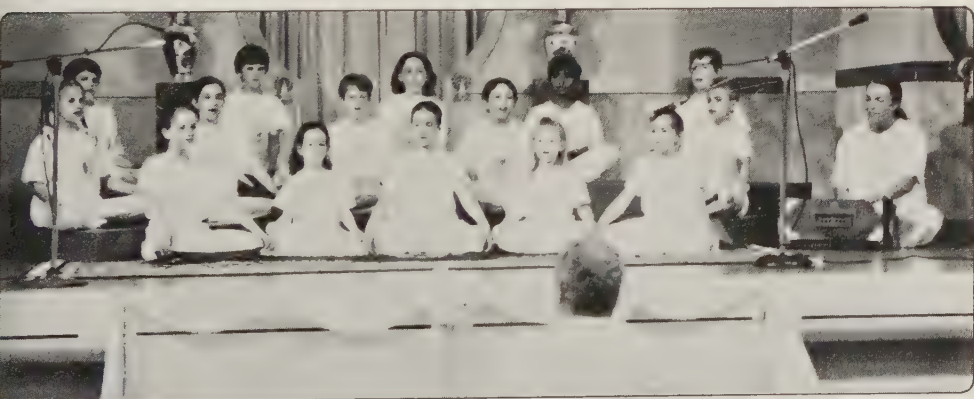
didn't know. So that is why the writer of the Tamil song said, "Maybe God didn't know that I know I am His instrument; so, God, please know that I know that you know." That's it.

Thus, my special message to you today is this: See the guru in everything, in every face, everywhere. Be a humble instrument. Let God work through you. Somebody gave me a bumper sticker that said, "Let go. Let God." Simple. An old Tamil aphorism states that if you're free from attachment, you're already home. Remembering this maxim, let us all be peaceful and happy, becoming humble instruments without the ego, so that He can do a good job on us and the world will become a better place for us to live in. Thank you. God bless you.

As in previous years, the evening program brought out all the talents of Sri Gurudev's children as they made their heartfelt offerings of music, dance, and eloquent tributes. Krishna Holt from Canada led the Guru chants, followed by the Yogaville Vidyalayam Primary School children, who, with affection and perfection, chanted from the scriptures. Vishnu Jayson, a long-time disciple and director of the New York Integral Yoga Teaching Center, presented a warm and moving tribute to Sri Gurudev,

sharing with us many poignant and humorous recollections of his experiences with Sri Gurudev through the years. Lakshmi Bertram and Bala Otto of Yogaville gave excellent performances of Bharata Natyam, the classical dance form of South India, and Renee Chan of California and Hong Kong presented a piano piece, as did Vinaya Davis of New Jersey, who was accompanied by Swami Gurucharanananda (Mataji) on the violin. Maire Berry of Yogaville read an inspirational story and her husband, Jay, delighted us with his magic. Swami Sarvaananda offered a loving tribute to Sri Gurudev, after which Meera Alexander, Vinaya Davis, and Kumari and Snehan de Sachy presented the new Yogaville anthem, "Heaven on Earth." The Saturday evening program ended joyfully with a "thank you" message by Swami Chidananda, Vice-President/Financial Officer of Satchidananda Ashram-Yogaville.

On Sunday morning, we celebrated the eighth anniversary of the LOTUS dedication with the ecumenical Light Of Truth Universal Service and a garlanding of the Shrine's central altar. Following this program, we proceeded to Kailash to honor the *moorthis* of Lords Siva Nataraja, Krishna, Ganesha and the Divine Mother, Parashakti. The Vidyalayam students performed a beautiful *puja* to Lord Nataraja. The children moved and inspired us with their pure devo-



Vidyalayam students chant their devotion and praises to the Guru



Lakshmi Bertram

tion, dedication and discipline. Then, Sri Gurudev performed *harathi* to the other deities, also offering the light to all assembled our hearts and minds were filled with the power of Sri Gurudev's light and love. Enveloping us with his unconditional love, Sri Gurudev, in a voice filled with emotion, devotion, and gratitude, concluded the program with the following words.

APPROACHING GOD WITH A PURE HEART

There are many ways in which we can experience the Spirit, but of all the ways, the devotional approach is the most important, *bakhti*, *bakhti*, *bakhti*. And then, too, this approach from the heart and mind of an innocent child is the one that brings the most benefit. Here we have seen these angels of the Yogaville Vidyalayam performing their *puja*. To the scholarly,

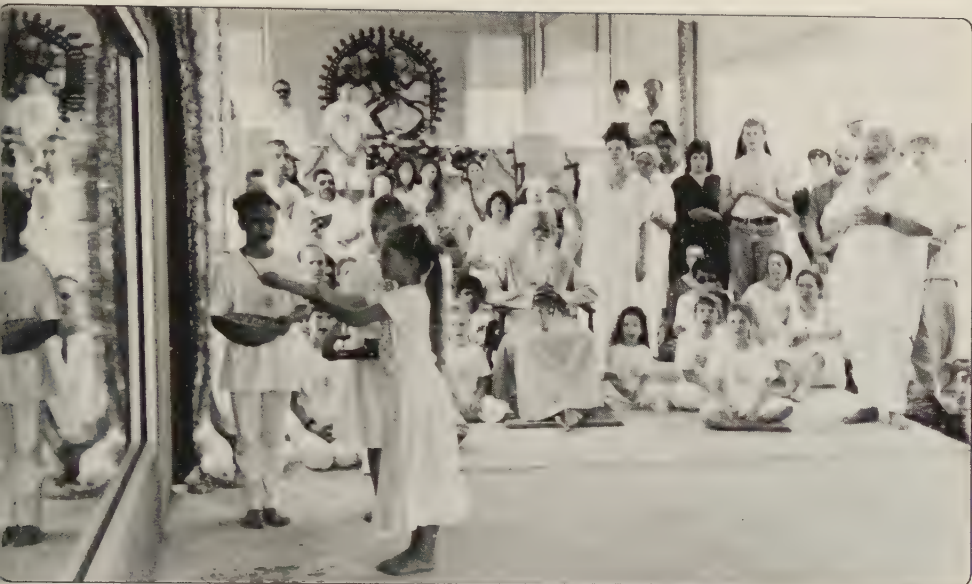
traditional people, it may look very simple. But God doesn't want the scholarly or traditional approach; rather, He wants the authentic approach. For He appreciates what comes from the very pure heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God."

When these children perform the worship, they feel moved; I never witnessed this feeling when I saw traditional *pujas* and other rituals performed, because here it was done with sincere, pure, innocent hearts. We're fortunate enough to have these angels to teach us how to approach God—with pure, innocent hearts. They really take us to great heights, making us feel the presence of God by their worship. Therefore, let us all have that heart of innocence and purity to approach the beloved Father-Mother God. That way, the Lord can take care of us.

I don't have many words to say because I'm filled with emotion. I won-



Bala Otto



Vidyalayam students perform *harathi* to the deities

der what we have done to have these angels come to show the way. May the Lord bless us all with a sincere, pure heart so that we may approach Him with the heart of a child. May God bless our children with that same kind of innocent heart with which to worship God throughout their lifetime so that they may set good examples for others. Thank you, children, God bless you.

As the celebration of Guru Poornima came to an end, the glowing faces of the devotees reflected the love, devotion and gratitude that filled their hearts as they contemplated the peace and joy, love and light that they had experienced during this most blessed occasion. Jai Sri Satguru Maharaj ki!

SALUTATIONS TO OUR NEWEST SANNYASIN AND INTEGRAL YOGA MINISTERS!

On 8 July, heralding the auspicious celebration of Guru Poornima celebration at Yogaville, three Integral Yoga seminarians, Dhyani Simonini, Luxman Koti, and Kumari de Sachy, were ordained as Integral Yoga ministers, and on the traditional Guru Poornima day, the full moon day of 22 July, Sister Ganga Chaitanya was initiated into the holy order of Sannyas and was reborn as Swami Gangeshwarananda.

May they all continue to dedicate their lives to God and His entire Creation. ■

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there willl your heart be also.

—Jesus



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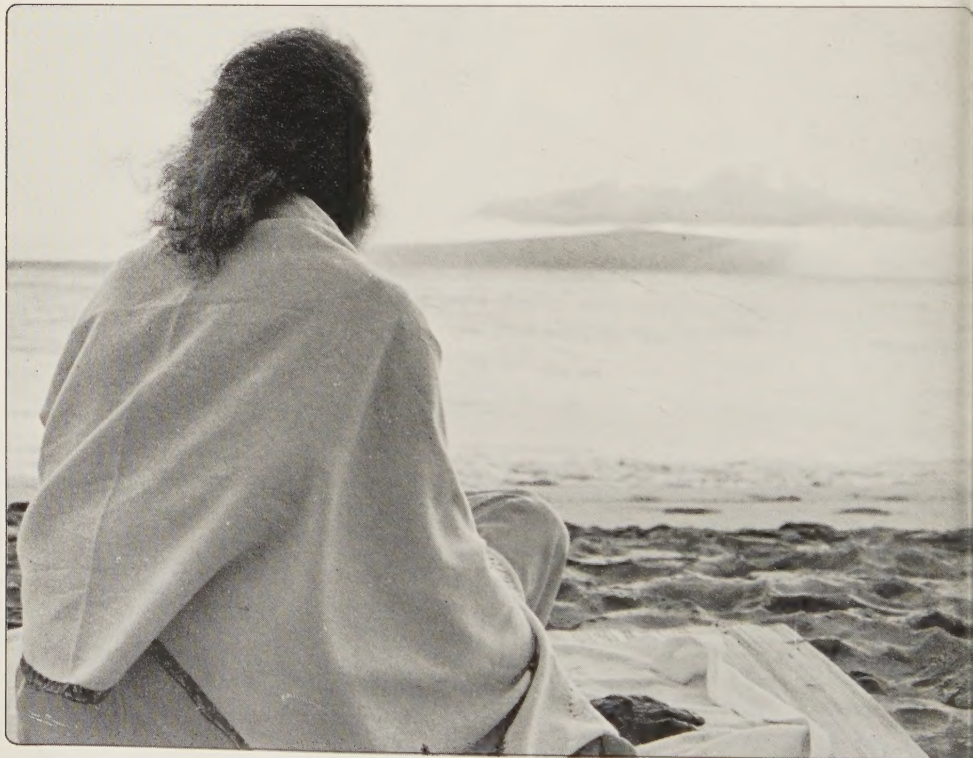
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